

ENGINEERING HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Proposal to Nominate

Historic Railway Mural, Central Railway Station

as an Item of Engineering Heritage Interest

Item Name:	Historic Railway Mural, Central Railway Station		
Other/Former Names:	Not applicable		
Locality:	Former Interstate Booking Office, off the Grand Concourse, Central Railway Station		
Address:	Central Railway Station		
Co-ordinates	Lat: -33.882706246013946 Lon: 151.20689175507692		
Current Owner:	Transport Asset Holding Entity		
Original Owner:	NSW State Railways		
Current use:	Historic mural about NSW railways		
Former use:	Walls and floor of an area formerly occupied by kitchen and scullery of the upstairs Dining Room at Central Station.		
Proposed use:	Historic mural about NSW railways, and part of the décor of a catering outlet.		
Item Condition:	Excellent		
Designer:	Peter Melocco		
Builder:	Guido Zuliani and Melocco Brothers		
Started:	1951	Completed:	1951
History:	<p>On 8 September 1952 a new air-conditioned Interstate Booking Office was opened at Sydney Terminal station. It was built in an area formerly occupied by a kitchen and scullery.</p> <p>The finish of the new Interstate Booking Office was its outstanding feature. A decorative scagliola 3-metre-high frieze was installed along the top of the walls with historic images of transport in New South Wales from the late 1700s. It was a finalist in the Sulman Prize for 1951 and was designed by Peter Melocco, who migrated to Australia in 1908, and was made by Guido Zuliani, an artist brought out from Italy.</p> <p>Melocco Brothers <i>Originally from Northern Italy, Peter Melocco, trained as a mosaic artist and marble worker at the Coopers Union Trade College in New York.</i></p> <p><i>Aged 26, Peter arrived in Sydney in 1908. One of his first achievements was designing and constructing the altar floor of the Chapel of the Irish Saints in St Mary's Cathedral. From the profit of £200 Peter brought his brothers Anthony and Galliano to Australia and with them formed Melocco Brothers.</i></p> <p><i>They introduced Terrazzo to Australia, which immediately became a very popular bathroom material; they also carried out some of the finest</i></p>		

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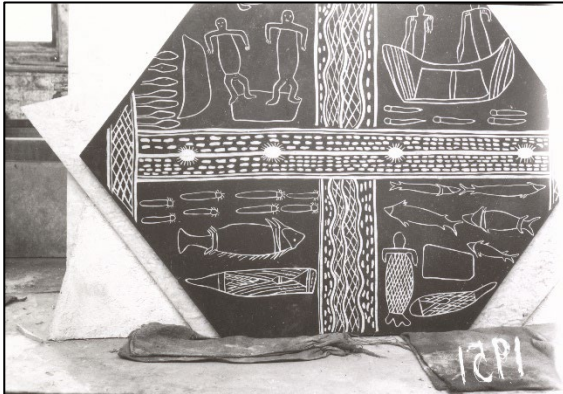
	<p><i>decorative plasterwork in many private homes, theatres, and public buildings.</i></p> <p><i>Among Melocco Bros achievements are the Tasman map on the floor of the vestibule to the NSW State Library, the floor of the entrance to the State Theatre in Market Street, and the scagliola-clad columns imitating green serpentine, in the banking chamber of the Commonwealth Bank at 48 Martin Place.</i></p> <p><i>Peter's last great work and many considered it his greatest achievement, was the Terrazzo inlay floor in the St Mary's Cathedral crypt. The design was translated from the Book of Kells and is in the shape of a Celtic cross; it was done in consultation with the late Rev. Dr. W. Leonard. It is a work of international standard.</i></p> <p>A terrazzo floor was installed in the Booking Office which includes a large marble mosaic map of Australia showing the national rail network in 1951. Included at the ends of the terrazzo floor were the shields of the Australian states.</p> <p>The scagliola frieze, terrazzo floor and marble mosaic were installed by Melocco Bros. Pty. Ltd. of Annandale.</p> <p>In the mid-1960s the function of the Interstate Booking Office was transferred to a new Interstate Booking Office established in the passageway on the western side of the General Booking Office.</p> <p>Between 1976 and 1980, the former Interstate Booking Office area was used by the railways for a number of promotional displays. It later became a lounge and bar, a restaurant, and following a refit, a bakery and fast-food outlet were opened on 8 November 1999. Then on Saturday 26 September 2015, a fire broke out in the kitchen of the fast-food outlet. Fortunately, the fire was contained to the kitchen area, but the whole area was closed to the public.</p> <p>During October / November 2017, the frieze in the former Interstate Booking Office was cleaned of grease and other grime that had accumulated over the years, as well as the residue from the fire, by a contractor, International Conservation Services. And in November 2017, work commenced on the task of fitting out the area as a new catering outlet, which is the current use.</p>
<p>Description:</p>	<p>The artwork that illustrates significant events in the history of transport in New South Wales to 1851 and establishment of the railways until 1951, is in the former Interstate Booking Office at Central Station – the former Booking Office is now a fast-food restaurant.</p> <p>The artwork comprises a decorative scagliola frieze along the top of the walls, and a terrazzo floor with a large map of Australia in marble, which shows the Australian railway network, with the shields of New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland on the western side of the map, and the emblems of Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania on the eastern side. There is also an image of a compass.</p> <p><i>Scagliola is a composite substance made from plaster of Paris, glue and natural pigments, imitating marble and other hard stones; it is used in architecture and sculpture. The same term identifies the technique for producing columns, sculptures, and other architectural elements that resemble inlays in marble.</i></p> <p>On the frieze on the northern side of the room, there are eight distinct scenes showing the evolution of transport in New South Wales. Starting</p>

ENGINEERING HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

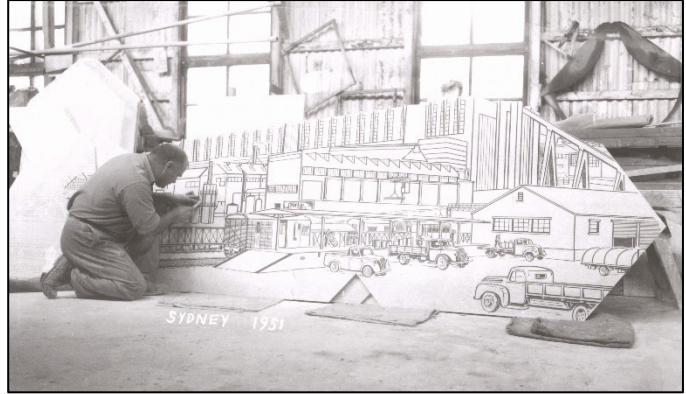
	<p>from the left, the first panel is for the year 1787 and shows the Aboriginal community before the arrival of the Europeans. The next panel shows the arrival of the First Fleet from Britain in 1788, followed by panels showing a bullock team hauling a wagon in 1800, a stagecoach in 1849, the turning of the first sod for the Sydney to Parramatta railway in 1850, the opening of the Sydney to Parramatta line in 1855, the Great Zig Zag at Lithgow in 1869, and the city underground railway in 1927.</p> <p>The panel at the eastern end of the room (Elizabeth Street end) shows the old Eveleigh steam running depot, with an electric train passing.</p> <p>There are three distinctive scenes on the Grand Concourse side of the room; from the left, the first panel has an image of an AD60 Beyer-Garratt locomotive on a goods train in regional New South Wales, probably hauling wheat. <i>The AD60 Class engine had not entered service when the frieze was being created and so its representation is not as accurate as those of the other locomotives appearing in the frieze.</i> The second shows a wharf scene with coal being loaded from rail wagons into ships at Newcastle, and the third has locomotive 5801 hauling coal from a mine to a power station.</p> <p>The panel at the western end of the room (Railway Square end) shows streamlined locomotive 3805 hauling carriage set NAB 113 across the Hawkesbury River bridge.</p> <p>On the map of Australia on the floor, the major rail routes of the rail network picked out in an aluminium colour are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne – Sydney – Brisbane – Cairns • Sydney – Broken Hill – Port Pirie • Melbourne – Adelaide – Port Pirie – Kalgoorlie – Perth <p>The rest of the Australian network is highlighted in a dull red, with the state capitals being shown as red dots and Canberra as a green dot. The map shows a number of long-gone lines.</p>
<p>Significance:</p>	<p>The mural, marble map and terrazzo floor are significant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a tangible public artwork illustrating the history of the NSW railways up to 1951; • as superb examples of Melocco Brothers craftsmanship, particularly as it incorporates a rare artwork incised in scagliola; and • as a visual record of the Australian railway network as at 1951.
<p>Webpage Summary:</p>	<p>In September 1952 a new air-conditioned Interstate Booking Office was opened at Sydney Terminal station, with its outstanding feature being a decorative frieze in scagliola along the top of the walls that illustrated transport in New South Wales from the late 1700s to 1951. It was made by Guido Zuliani, an artist brought out from Italy.</p> <p>A terrazzo floor was installed which includes a large marble mosaic map of Australia, showing the national rail network in 1951. Included at the ends of the terrazzo floor were the shields of the Australian states.</p> <p>The scagliola frieze, terrazzo floor and marble mosaic were installed by Melocco Bros. Pty. Ltd. of Annandale.</p> <p>In the mid-1960s the function of the Interstate Booking Office was transferred to a new Interstate Booking Office established in the passageway on the western side of the General Booking Office. Subsequently, the old booking office area had many uses including as a bakery and fast-food outlet. Following a fire in the kitchen area in 2015, the whole area was closed to the public.</p>

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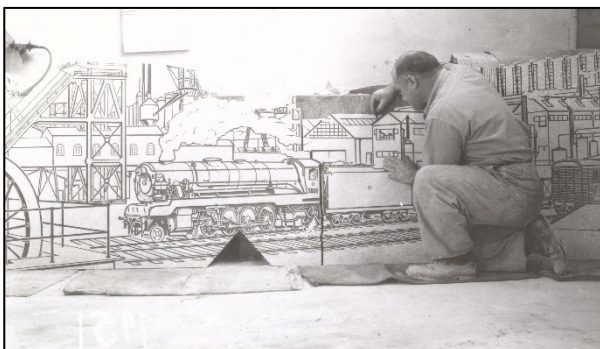
	<p>Eventually, the former Interstate Booking Office was cleaned of grease and other grime that had accumulated over the years, as well as the residue from the fire, and in November 2017 work commenced on the task of fitting out the area as a new catering outlet, which is the current use.</p> <p>The whole artwork is available for public viewing and is a superb example of Melocco Bros craftsmanship; it illustrates the history of the NSW railways up to 1951; and is a visual record of the Australian railway network as at 1951.</p>		
Engineering Theme:	Transport, rail		
Heritage Listing:	Nil		
References/Sources:	<p>This nomination quotes from and draws extensively from the following sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banger, Chris. <i>The 1952 Interstate Booking Office at Sydney Terminal Station. Australian Railway History</i>, November 2020. • The Melocco journey. https://www.melocco.com.au/history. • Crypt – breathtaking design. https://stmaryscathedral.org.au/history-art/crypt/ 		
Nominated by:	Michael Clarke		
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EHA Branch:	Sydney	Nomination Date:	29 April 2024



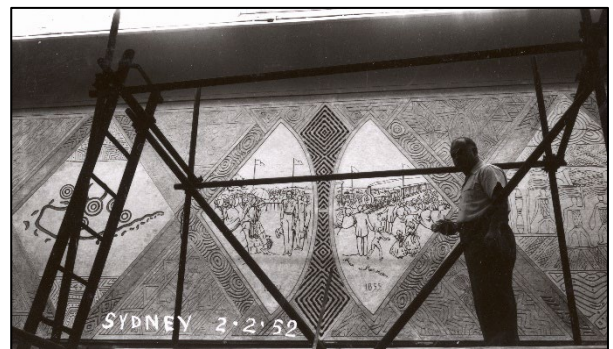
Making Aboriginal panel.
State Rail Authority Reference Photo Collection



Making 'coal mine to power station' panel.
State Rail Authority Reference Photo Collection



Making 'coal mine to power station' panel.
State Rail Authority Reference Photo Collection



Fixing panels to wall.
State Rail Authority Reference Photo Collection

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Making marble map of Australia.
State Rail Authority Reference Photo Collection



Interstate Booking Office opening 9 Sep.1952.
Reg Winsor (Commissioner for Railways), Joe Cahill (Premier) and Bill Sheahan (Minister for Transport).
State Rail Authority Reference Photo Collection



Aborigines and arrival of First Fleet.
Michael Clarke



Bullock dray hauling wool, and Cobb & Co coach.
Michael Clarke

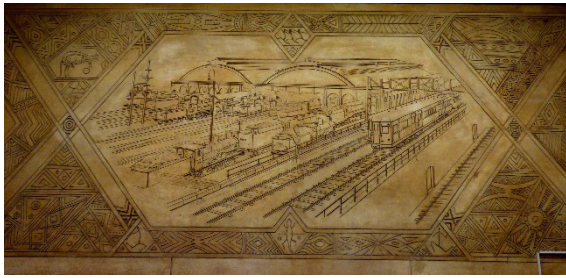


First railway: turning first sod 1850, and opening 1855.
Michael Clarke



Great Zig Zag 1879, and city electric railway 1927.
Michael Clarke

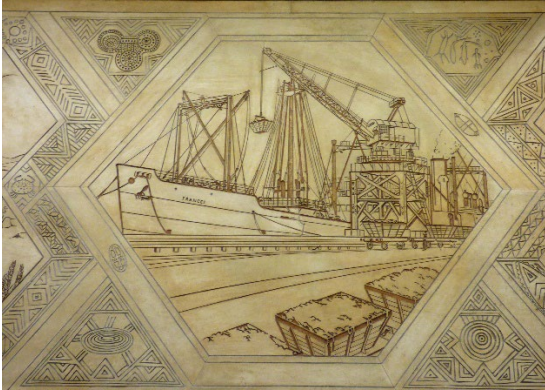
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Old Eveleigh steam running depot.
Michael Clarke



Garratt loco hauling wheat on western plains.
Michael Clarke



Loading coal at Newcastle.
Michael Clarke



Hauling coal from mine to power station.
Michael Clarke



Locomotive 3805 hauling passenger train across
the Hawkesbury River railway bridge.
Michael Clarke



Murals and map.

Michael Clarke



Marble map and NSW railway network, 1951.
Michael Clarke

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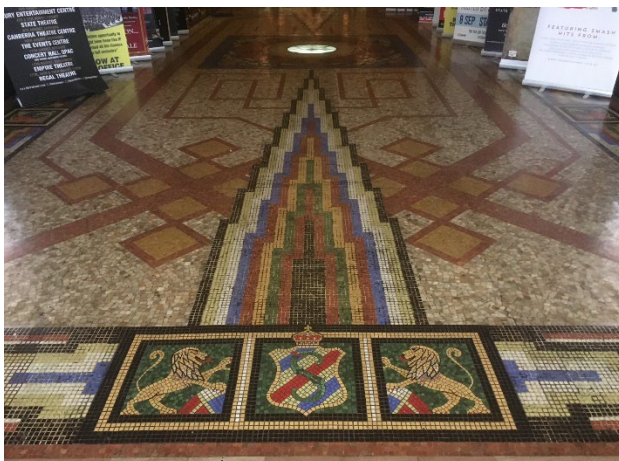
Peter Melocco's terrazzo floor St Mary's Cathedral.

Images by Michael Clarke



Entrance foyer, State Theatre by Melocco Brothers.

Images by Michael Clarke



ENGINEERING HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Tasman Map, State Library of New South Wales, by Melocco Brothers.

Images by Michael Clarke

